

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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R 061350Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8051

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, BC, LT

SUBJECT: PRESS REPORT OF LESOTHO OPPOSITIONIST LEADER MOKHEHLE

REF: A) 75 GABORONE 1393, B) 75 GABORONE 1388 C) MASERU 1089

1. GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED BOTSWANA DAILY NEWS MAY 5 EDITION CARRIED ON THE INSIDE PAGE AN ARTICLE ENTITLED "MOKHEHLE WANTS HELP TO GIVE LESOTHO PEACE." ARTICLE IS ACCOMPANIED BY ONE COLUMN PHOTO OF MOKHEHLE WHO WE UNDERSTAND DEPARTED BOTSWANA FOR LUSAKA BY AIR MAY 3. APPARENTLY INTERVIEW FOR ARTICLE TOOK PLACE SHORTLY BEFORE DEPARTURE. ACCORDING TO MASOTHO WHO SPOKE TO MOKHEHLE, HE WAS HERE ON A PRIVATE VISIT TO SEE FRIENDS.

2. ARTICLE REPORTS THAT MOKHEHLE SAID HE WAS CURRENTLY ENGAGED IN MOBILIZING A NUMBER OF AFRICAN COUNTRIES "INTERESTED IN THE PEACEFUL SOLUTION OF LESOTHO'S POLITICAL PROBLEMS". HE REPORTEDLY ADMITTED THAT "A FEW COUNTRIES" HAVE SHOWN AN INTEREST BUT DECLINED TO NAME THEM.

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3. MOKHEHLE EXPLAINED THAT A COALITION GOVERNMENT WAS THE MOST SENSIBLE THING TO THINK ABOUT BUT "A COALITION GOVERNMENT IN WHICH THERE WILL BE A PARITY BETWEEN OUR PARTIES, IN DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF OUR GOVERNMENT LIKE THE CABINET." MOKHEHLE CLAIMED "THAT THERE ARE MORE BASOTHO BEHIND ME TODAY THAN THERE WERE IN 1970." HE ADDED THAT "THE MASSES IN LESOTHO ARE STRONGLY BEHIND THE BASOTHO CONGRESS AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT LEABUA JONATHAN KNOWS THAT THEY ARE STILL WHERE THEY WERE IN 1970 WHEN THE ELECTORATE DECIDED TO GET RID OF JONATHAN BY ELECTIONS AND VOTED THE BCP TO TAKE OVER THE GOVERNMENT".

4. TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF THE RECENTLY ARRIVED UGANDAN EMBASSY IN LESOTHO, MOKHEHLE SAID HE DID NOT KNOW THE PURPOSES OF THE UGANDAN GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT "IF THE INTEREST OF FIELD MARSHALL AMIN WAS TO GET LEABUA OUT OF HIS SITUATION AND PROP HIM UP IT WOULD BE VERY UNFORTUNATE".

5. COMMENT: MOKHEHLE'S STATEMENT WAS ALSO PLAYED OVER RADIO BOTSWANA. IT IS BOUND TO INCREASE GOL CONCERN ABOUT BOTSWANA ALLOWING ITS TERRITORY TO BE USED FOR ATTACK AGAINST JONATHAN GOVERNMENT. IT WILL HEIGHTEN GOL SUSPICION THAT FACILITIES EXIST IN BOTSWANA TO RECEIV EXILED BCP ACTIVISTS FOR INFILTRATION INTO LESOTHO ALONG WITH SOUTH AFRICAN PAC AND ANC NATIONALISTS WHO HAVE BEEN TRAINED IN ALGERIA. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT BOTSWANA IS ALLOWING ITS TERRITORY TO BE USED IN THIS MANNER, BUT MOKHEHLE'S REPEATED VISITS AND HIS ATTACKS OM JONATHAN WILL FURTHER STRAIN BOTSWANA-LESOTHO RELATIONS.

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